

Fort Pillow State Historic Park Strategic Management Plan

2023 – 2033

DRAFT

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Park Purpose, History and Description

Fort Pillow State Historic Park was primarily designed to protect and preserve the historic remains of the 1861 breastworks, battlefields, and the fort which represents the Civil War History of the park. The secondary uses include camping, boating access to the 25-acre Park Lake, fishing, picnicking, hiking, wildlife viewing, and programs for all ages on nature, history, and recreational activities.

The mission of Fort Pillow State Historic Park is to “protect and preserve unique examples of natural, cultural, and scenic areas and provide a variety of quality outdoor experiences through a well-planned and well-managed system”. Fort Pillow has been designated an historical area because of the significance of the site’s Civil War history. The primary reasons for the Parks existence are preservation and cultural enrichment.

Goals, Objectives and Action Plans

THE RESOURCES: Exemplary Natural and Cultural Stewardship

Goal: Tennessee State Parks will be nationally recognized for exemplary stewardship of natural and cultural resources.

Objective - *More and better stewards:* Increase internal and external stewards who share Tennessee State Parks core values and can contribute to the State Parks mission to preserve, protect, and share Tennessee’s natural and cultural resources.

- Action Plan: Increase onsite and offsite interpretive programs for schools, church groups, scout groups, and anyone seeking knowledge with regards to the Natural and Historical aspects of Fort Pillow State Historic Park. To continue to work with and organize events with the descendants of the Battle of Fort Pillow of 1864, local administrative staff, elected officials, scout leaders, and other representatives.

Objective - *Better resource management practices:* Identify, manage, and restore unique natural and cultural resources for generations to come.

- Action Plan: To continue with the utilization of resource management projects to help ensure the natural and Historical features are protected, maintained, and present for generations to come. To work with and encourage all staff to not only assist with all resource management projects and to assist with the research to make the project their own and to ensure the Park is cared for with the upmost professional manner. To work with uniformed staff so that the importance of resource management is portrayed in every program offered and that all visitors are aware and understand the importance of it.

Objective: *Better data and technology:* Leverage data and technology to help inform and guide decisions on natural and cultural resources stewardship.

- Action Plan: To provide a written list of all Historical features within and outside the trail system to not only educate the staff and the visitors but to ensure they are maintained to the highest standard. To provide signage at each historical landmark to help identify and teach the public and to ensure everyone is aware of their surroundings. To continue with evasive species removal through partnerships with local organizations and signature events such as the Weed Wrangle.

THE VISITOR: Welcoming and Inviting to All

Goal: Tennessee State Parks will be the most accessible, welcoming, and inviting system of parks that enriches Tennesseans and visitors through excellent interpretation, education, and resource-based recreation.

Objective: *accessible, welcoming, and inviting to all:* create quality and varied programs of interpretation, recreation, and outreach so that all audiences feel welcome and invited.

- Action Plan: To continue with educating the public about the history of Fort Pillow through various ways from Museum tours, Park tours, guided hikes, offsite programs, and presentations. While working with IPE the staff at Fort Pillow will continue to “Tell Full Stories” With regards to the 1864 Battle of Fort Pillow as well as all related Civil War History. The staff of Fort Pillow will continue to update and utilize the Park website to better tell the full story with the help of the State Parks IPE team.

Objective: *high quality programming:* develop and support mission-based and resource-relevant programs to engage visitors, empower staff, and develop community wellbeing.

- Action Plan: Work with uniform staff to document all programs being offered within and off the park. Allow Park staff to not only use this as a guide but to also add to and help ensure programming at Fort Pillow continues to grow. This resource will not be used by uniformed staff but by seasonal staff as well.

Objective: *resource-based outdoor recreation:* provide resource-based outdoor recreation opportunities that ensure representation of Tennessee’s natural, scenic, and cultural resources.

- Action Plan: Provide outdoor opportunities to showcase not only the historical aspects of Fort Pillow but the natural beauty as well. Through signature hikes, monthly scheduled events, fee-based opportunities, and working with outside organizations, the staff of Fort Pillow will continue to grow and add outdoor opportunities.

THE AMENITIES: Well-Maintained Facilities and Amenities

Goal: Tennessee State Parks will be well maintained with facilities and amenities that delight visitors and make Tennesseans proud.

Objective: *Improve maintenance:* Improve overall maintenance and upkeep of all park facilities and amenities that contribute to meaningful visitor experiences.

- Action Plan: Continue with daily facility inspections, not only encourage but provide training opportunities for all staff to better their knowledge in facility maintenance. Allow Park staff to participate in activities such as wood working at other parks to allow these practices to be utilized at Fort Pillow. Encourage staff to take advantage of all resource management training opportunities as well as higher education courses.

Objective: *Better Park accessibility:* ensure all visitors have opportunities for meaningful experiences in every Tennessee State Park.

- Action Plan: Through donations, 327.15 funds, and Park expenditures, Fort Pillow will continue to create areas that can accommodate everyone regardless of their accessibility. Fort Pillow will continue to provide trails to not only showcase what the Park has to offer but to ensure they are clear, well-marked, and ready for each user. Semi-monthly trail inspections will be utilized by all uniformed staff as well as maintenance staff. Daily inspections will be conducted by the CW3 with regards to facilities and reported back to the Park Manager. The staff of Fort Pillow will continue to work with Facilities and Management to ensure we provide adequate accessibility.

Objective: *Quality and welcoming facilities and amenities:* provide high-quality and well-planned facilities and amenities that enrich the visitor experience.

- Action Plan: Ensure kiosk and park signage is maintained throughout the park. Inspections will be made daily during Park rounds and inspections. Ensure all facilities are not only well maintained but that they are safe and ready for use. Through 327.15 funds, donations, and park expenditures upgrades will be made as approval is given. Continue with kiosk upgrades through grants and updated signage through IPE. Fort Pillow will provide free Wi-fi for all guests within the campground and Park Museum which will be funded by grant money for installation and the monthly services will be paid for through Park expenditures.

THE OPERATIONS: Operational Excellence

Goal: Tennessee State Parks will be a national model for operational excellence in a state park system.

Objective: *Support and empower our people:* support and empower our workforce by creating a caring environment that encourages professional growth and great customer service.

- Action Plan: To ensure that all staff members complete all required training courses such as learning pyramid, customer service, respectful workplace, etc. Continue to work with outside agencies such as West Tn State Penitentiary to provide training opportunities close to the park that does not require extensive travel. Monthly updates will be given to each staff member with regards to their individual training roster. Other opportunities such as chainsaw safety, Power point presentation classes, Excel classes, GIS training will be encouraged for all staff.

Objective: *Efficient and effective operations:* provide efficient, effective, and fiscally responsible service to Tennesseans and our visitors.

- Action Plan: To ensure the Park operates efficiently as possible. To ensure that staff is not wasteful with regards to supplies, fuel, electricity, water, and time. To continue to work with outside organizations for support with regards to litter removal, trail clearing, programming, donations, and other work-related functions. To continue to provide signature events to address evasive species and other related issues through volunteer hours and outside assistance.

Park Overview

Site Fact Sheet

Park Name	Fort Pillow State Historic Park
Site Manager	Robby Tidwell
Area Manager	Zach Tinkle
Park acreage	1,642 acres
Total number of visitors (FY 2022)	648,764
Total expenses before CO (FY 2022)	\$526,646
Total revenues (FY 2022)	\$91,301
Retail cost recovery % ¹	113%
Park cost recovery %	17%
Average expense per visitor (FY 2022)	\$0.81
Average revenue per visitor (FY 2022)	\$0.14
Gross profit or loss	(\$435,345)
Total full-time available positions / filled	7
Total part-time available positions / filled	0
Primary feeder markets	Dyersburg, Jackson, Memphis, East Arkansas
Primary reasons people visit	History and Natural beauty
Opportunities for improvement	Erosion control

Key Attractions

The amenities or features listed below are those that seem to be most popular for visitors.

- Civil War Battle Site
- Topographical Significance of the Chickasaw Bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River
- Observation Deck/Slip In
- Provides angling and boating opportunities for residents and destination travelers with a 25-acre lake
- Approximately 13 miles of trails that take you through the historical features that make up Fort Pillow State Historic Park
- Museum/Gift Shop/Visitors Center open 7 days a week with Artifacts, Park Video, Informative panels throughout
- Butterfly Garden-used as a wedding venue, relaxation, or just a place to unwind

¹ Based on T.C.A. 11-3-305, Cost recovery of revenue-generating facilities

- Family Campground with RV and tent sites
- Restored Fortification/Inner fortifications
- Group Camp-accommodates 200 tent campers
- Back Country Camping
- Watercraft Rentals

Site and Operations Assessment

This site and operations assessment is a culmination of analyses and findings from a review of the condition of facilities, infrastructure, and operations at Fort Pillow State Historic Park. The findings and observations are not intended to be an exhaustive review of all issues present but provide a basic understanding of the predominant issues that contribute to the site's current operating conditions. The assessment includes the following:

1. Site and Facilities Assessment
2. Operational Assessment
3. Financial Assessment

Site and Facility Assessment

Methodology

Facility and asset conditions are rated using a differential scale of excellent, good, fair, or poor. Descriptions of conditions that are attributed to each of these findings are also provided.

Scale of Conditions	
Rating	General Description
Excellent	Facilities/amenities are in 'excellent' condition when they show little or no maintenance or repair problems. Facilities do not feature any major design or operational issues or flaws that contribute to diminished use or increased maintenance or upkeep. Facilities are easy to clean and maintain in order to place them back into public use and the users perceive them to be in excellent shape.
Good	Facilities/amenities are in 'good' condition when they show only minor maintenance or repair problems. Most maintenance issues with these facilities typically appear to be the result of age and/or heavy use. Facilities may only feature minor design or operational issues that contribute to diminished use or increased maintenance or upkeep. Facilities are moderately easy to clean and maintain in order to place them back into service and the users perceive them to be adequate for their use, but probably not in excellent shape.
Fair	Facilities/amenities are in 'fair' condition when they show significant maintenance or repair problems. Facilities generally exhibit ongoing maintenance issues that appear to be the result of age, heavy use, or design or operational flaws. Some maintenance and repair needs may compound their fair condition by being deferred because of budget and/or resource limitations. Facilities require more effort to clean and maintain before placing them back into service and the users may perceive them as being less than adequate for their use and in a state of deterioration. The facility or structure may need of major repair or replacement.

Poor	Facilities/amenities are in 'poor' condition when they show significant, on-going maintenance or repair problems that ultimately may result in suspended use for repair/replacement. Maintenance and repair issues are possibly the result of poor maintenance and clearly the result of age, heavy use, or design or operational flaws. Problems with the facilities are often compounded over time due to consistently-deferred maintenance and repair because of budget and/or resource limitations. Facilities may feature major design or operational issues that contribute to diminished use or increased maintenance or upkeep. Facilities require excessive effort to clean and maintain before placing them back into service and the users often perceive them as being inadequate for their use and in a state of serious deterioration. The facility or structure may need of major repair or replacement.
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Facility Inventory and Assessment

The table below is an inventory of facilities and amenities at Fort Pillow State Historic Park and provides the assessed condition of each as reviewed in April 2023.

Site Asset / Amenity	Quantity	Condition
Park Museum	1	Good
Ranger Residence	1	Good
Manager Residence	1	Good
Picnic Pavilion	1	Good
North Bathhouse	1	Good
South Bathhouse	1	Good
Maintenance Shop	1	Good
Group Camp	1	Excellent
Tractor Shed	1	Good
Restored Fortification	1	Good
Bridge/Suspension	1	Poor
Family Campground	1	Good
Sheds	3	Good
Overlook/Observation Deck	1	Excellent
Play Structure	2	Good
Sewage Pump Station	1	Functioning
Sub Surface Septic System	9	Functioning

Trail Inventory and Assessment

Trail Name	Mileage	Condition
Chickasaw Bluff Trail (Blue)	4.00	Fair (erosion concerns)
Park Lake Water Trail	1.20	Excellent
Red Historical Trail	8.00	Fair (erosion concerns)
Yellow Historical Trail	5.20	Fair (erosion concerns)
Grand Total	18.40	

Fort Pillow will provide and maintain approximately 13 miles of hiking trails that will enable the hikers to gain knowledge of the Parks history and natural aspects, participate in Healthy Park Healthy Person, and at the same time cause no harm to the natural and cultural features. Fort Pillow has 3 trails each with their own significance to the park. The Blue Trail winds its way along the top of the First Chickasaw Bluff above the Mississippi River. The Red and Yellow trails are at time the same trail with the only difference being the Red Trail has 4 extra loops. The Yellow Trail encompasses the majority of the outer breastworks and all 5 inner fortifications. Fort Pillow staff constantly monitors the trail conditions and looks for issues such as erosion, fallen trees, litter, grass height, and flooding. Fort Pillow staff addresses issues as they arise such as the implantation of box style steps, water breaks, re-blazing of trails, adding of culverts, etc.

New Assets Needed

List new assets and amenities that would fall under capital expenditures that are needed to improve visitor experience and operational efficiency.

New Asset & Amenities	Description
Historical Interpretive Cabin	It will assist with interpretation of the site.

Prioritized Facility Needs

Based on the facility inventory and assessment, these prioritized needs have been identified.

Facility Need	Priority Assignment
Repairs to kiosk and/or replacement	Medium
Replace suspension bridge	High(safety)
Update Museum Restrooms to match retail area	Medium
Add toilet stalls to the North and South bathhouses	High
Add 4 more RV spots from existing tent sites	High
Replace fishing pier	High(safety)
Gates and fencing	High
Seasonal housing	High
Replace group picnic pavilion with ADA restrooms	High
Fencing around the playground	High

Operational Assessment

The Operational Assessment includes:

1. An inventory and classification of programs and services being provided at the site,
2. A review of staffing at the site,
3. A review of concessionaires and partners operating at the site,
4. Visitation and customer satisfaction, and
5. Professional development and training.

Inventory and Classification of Programs and Services

Programs and services are classified into one of three major categories:

- 1) Core or Essential Services;
- 2) Important Services; and
- 3) Value added or Visitor Supported Services.

Functions of the site are classified into these categories based in part on the mission and public mandates for both the site and the agency. For the programs and services in each of these categories, there are financial performance expectations that will define how services are funded and evaluated.

CATEGORY 1 – CORE SERVICES *[Largely supported by public subsidies]*

Core programs, services and facilities are those the agency must provide and/or are essential to capably govern and meet statutory requirements. The failure of the agency to provide Category 1 services at adequate levels could result in significant negative consequences for the public and the resources under protection. The criteria for programs or services to be classified as core or essential are:

- The services are mandated by the agency's law or charter or are contractually obligated by agreement to provide the services.
- The services are essential to protecting and supporting the public's health and safety.
- The services protect and maintain valuable assets and infrastructure.
- The services would generally and reasonably be expected and supported by residents, businesses, customers, and partners.
- The services are those that cannot or should not be provided by the private sector.
- The services provide a sound investment of public funds.

The following programs and services offered at Fort Pillow State Historic Park have been identified as **core services**:

- Support the mission of Tennessee State Parks which is "To preserve, protect, and share Tennessee's natural and cultural resources while providing safe, quality outdoor experiences."
- Provide for public access to the park, the facilities, and the grounds.
- Provide for public safety for visitors and protection of natural and cultural resources.
- Provide for maintenance of grounds, facilities, and infrastructure.
- Maintain facilities developed through the LWCF program to required standards.
- Provide for basic, non-staff supported day-use activities informational signage, trash cans and restroom facilities.
- Maintain Park drinking water and wastewater programs to state standards.

CATEGORY 2 – IMPORTANT SERVICES *[Supported by a balance of revenues and public subsidy]*

Important programs, services and facilities are those the agency should provide, and are important to governing and effectively serving residents, businesses, customers and partners. Providing Category 2 services expands or enhances the agency's ability to provide and sustain its core services. The criteria for programs or services to be classified as important are:

- The services expand, enhance or support identified core services.
- The services are broadly supported and utilized by the community, and are considered an appropriate, important, and valuable public good. Public support may be conditional upon the manner by which the services are paid for or funded.
- The services generate income or revenue that offsets some or all of the operating cost and/or are deemed to provide economic, social or environmental outcomes or results.

The following programs and services offered at Fort Pillow State Historic Park have been identified as **important services**:

- Provide a full range of environmental, cultural, and recreational programs.
- Offer park-specific information at the Visitor Center and Museum.
- Provide educational programs for schools and organized groups
- Provide for basic, non-staff supported day-use activities (such as hiking and picnicking) with trails and picnic tables.

CATEGORY 3 – VISITOR SUPPORTED SERVICES *[Almost exclusively supported by earned revenue]*

Visitor supported programs, services and facilities are those discretionary services that the agency may provide when additional funding or revenue exists to offset the cost of providing those services. Category 3 services provide added value above and beyond what is required or expected. The criteria for programs or services to be classified as visitor supported are:

- The services expand, enhance or support Core Services, Important Services and the quality of life of the visitors, community or stakeholders.
- The services are supported, valued and well utilized and provide an appropriate and valuable public benefit.
- The services generate income or funding from sponsorships, grants, user fees or other sources that offset some or all of their cost and/or provides a meaningful return on investment.
- The Services can possibly be provided through outsourcing or use of concessionaires, providing opportunities for community enterprise or services that may not otherwise be provided by the agency.
-

The following programs and services offered at Fort Pillow State Historic Park have been identified as **visitor supported services**:

- Operate and provide retail support services for the gift shop.
- Provide support services for 30 campsites.
- Provide support services for picnic shelters, group camp pavilion and back country camping.
- Provide support services for watercraft rentals
- Provide support services for firewood sales and delivery

Personnel / Staffing Review

Personnel and staffing at Fort Pillow State Historic Park represent the largest area of budgetary expense at an average of 81% of the total operating budget each year for the last three complete years, which is greater than the target of labor costs not exceeding 65% of total operating expenditures. The tables below and on the following page provide a basic review of the current staffing at the site.

Full Time Equivalent Employees

Position / Title	Quantity (FTE)	Compensation Total
Manager	1	*
Ranger 1	1	*
Ranger 2	1	*
Conservation Worker 1	1	\$30,504
Conservation Worker 3	1	\$38,184
Administrative Assistant 1	1	\$42,924
Clerk 2	1	\$27,780
TOTAL	7	\$317,316

**Law enforcement compensation confidential by TN law.*

Time Employees

Position / Title	Quantity	Compensation Total
None at this time		
TOTAL	0	

Labor Support

Labor Support	Annual Hours
Volunteers	744
Community Service Workers	
Engineering and Construction Crews	
Resource Management Crews	
Other: _____	
TOTAL	744

Total Labor Compensation Expense

Labor Type	Labor Expense
Full Time Equivalent Employees	\$317,316
Part Time Employees	0
TOTAL Annual Labor Expense	\$317,316



Additional Future Positions Needed

Position / Title	Quantity	FTE or PT	Year Needed	Justification
Conservation Worker 2	1	FTE	2023	Assist with mowing, weed eating, cleaning
TOTAL	1			

Financial Performance

Revenue per available unit (**Rev Per Unit**) for the last four years in park facilities is detailed in the table below.

Current Rev Per Unit

Fiscal Year	Campsites Rev Per Unit	Day Use Rev Per Unit
2019	1.72	1.03
2020	2.02	1.17
2021	3.99	1.11
2022	3.92	1.84

Projected Rev Per Unit - Based on current Rev Per Unit trends at the park and any known developments over the next four years.

Fiscal Year	Campsites Rev Per Unit	Day Use Rev Per Unit
2023	3.85	1.85
2024	3.90	1.86
2025	3.95	1.87
2026	3.97	1.88

Customer Service

Platform / Site	Year	Customer Satisfaction Level
Yelp	2023	4.5
Trip Advisor	2023	4.0
Google	2023	4.7
Facebook	2023	4.8

Professional Development and Training

The following professional development and training opportunities are being explored and planned for the staff and volunteers at this park:

- Wildland Firefighting
- Chainsaw Safety
- CIT training
- EMR training
- Routine management and skill training
- Quarterly administrative staff training
- Routine law enforcement training

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Summary of Key Recommendations

Please provide short-term, mid-term, and long-term recommendations for addressing operational issues at the park and improving overall park performance.

Short Term Recommendations (Less than 1 year)

1. Site and Facilities

- a. Convert 4 RV sites in the Family Campground
- b. Use existing 20 amp sites and convert to 20/30/50 amp site

2. Operations and Staffing

- a. Continue to use maintenance Monday through Friday to clean and maintain
- b. Use uniform staff on Saturday, Sunday, and Holidays to clean and maintain

3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience

- a. Allow RV campers to have more RV sites to choose from throughout the year
- b. More RV sites are requested weekly

Mid Term Recommendations (2-5 years)

1. Site and Facilities

- a. Add 2 toilet stalls to each side of the North and South Bathhouses

2. Operations and Staffing

- a. Continue with CW1 cleaning and checking daily Monday through Friday
- b. Continue with Uniformed staff cleaning on Saturday, Sunday, and Holidays
- c. Add Conservation Worker 2

3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience

- a. **Provide restroom capability during the busy seasons and weekends;** when showers are being used this will allow us to offer restrooms without wait

Long Term Recommendations (5+ years)

1. Site and Facilities

- a. Construction of historical Interpretive cabin; construction of cabins will enhance the interpretation provided by Park staff and will help show the living conditions of the civil war soldier

2. Operations and Staffing

- a. Uniform staff along with the living history presenters will use for interpretation throughout the year

3. Customer Service / Visitor Experience

- a. Allow visitors to see how living conditions were during the 1860s
- b. Help presenters better showcase the life of a civil war soldier

Resource Management Plan

A resource management plan is a specific statement of the objectives you have for your land and natural resources, as well as any significant cultural and historic resources stewarded by the state park. This includes a defined series of priorities and activities that will take place to meet those objectives. This can include future potential land acquisitions or divestitures that are necessary to meet the park's resource management goals and objectives.

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation exists to enhance the quality of life for citizens of Tennessee and to be stewards of our natural environment by: Protecting and improving the quality of Tennessee's air, land, and water through a responsible regulatory system; Protecting and promoting human health and safety; Conserving and promoting natural, cultural, and historic resources; and providing a variety of quality outdoor recreational experiences.

The mission of Fort Pillow State Historic Park is to "protect and to preserve unique examples of natural, cultural, and scenic areas and provide a variety of quality outdoor experiences through a well-planned and well-managed system". Fort Pillow has been designated as an historical area because of the significance of the site's Civil War history. The primary reasons for the park's existence are preservation and cultural enrichment.

The contents of this resource management plan are as follows:

1. Resource Management Objectives
2. Resource Inventory and Assessment
3. Management Strategies
4. Priority Actions
5. Supplemental Information

Resource Management Objectives

Goal: Tennessee State Parks will be nationally recognized for exemplary stewardship of natural and cultural resources.

Objective - *More and better stewards:* Increase internal and external stewards who share Tennessee State Parks core values and can contribute to the State Parks mission to steward Tennessee's natural and cultural resources.

Objective - *Better resource management practices:* Identify, manage, and restore unique natural and cultural resources for generations to come.

Objective: *Better data and technology:* Leverage data and technology to help inform and guide decisions on natural and cultural resources stewardship.

Aligned with these objectives are specific strategies to achieve the desired outcomes for the natural, cultural, and historic resources of this park.

Strategies

- A. Education-Work with local schools to show the importance of respecting our resources. Provide and promote programs to educate the public on the importance of valuing our state park resources. Park day and events such as Weed Wrangle are programs designated for volunteers

- to help clean up the outer earthworks and get a chance to learn about why they are built and how we preserve them.
- B. Preservation-Protect all native species throughout the park through observation and education. Ban all planting of vegetation except when permission has been granted through regional supervision. Removal of any invasive species will be done through supervised instruction.
 - C. Maintenance-The Staff will ensure that all projects that involve planting and removal of all species will be supervised and/or work completed by credited licensed landscaper. All planted areas (butterfly garden) will be cared for and maintained to provide a pleasing and educational atmosphere for all park visitors. All material purchased to maintain the resources of Fort Pillow will be used in a way that will not cause harm to existing and future native resources.
 - D. Protection for Inner Historical Fortifications-Provide water barriers to help prevent erosion damage. Replace all wood material such as walls in a way that will not damage or cause future damage to the fortifications. Provide education for the public in a way that will not negatively impact the historical significance.
 - E. Protection for the outer earth/breast works-Provide water barriers to help prevent erosion damage. Replace all wood material such as walls in a way that will not damage or cause future damage to the fortifications. Provide education for the public in a way that will not negatively impact the historical significance.
 - F. Make repairs on all facilities and or structures in a way to which all historical and natural resources are not damaged-Ensure all park projects are supervised to ensure no damage is done to the historical and natural aspects of the park. Educate all contractors before any construction or work is done.

Resource Inventory and Assessment

The significant natural, cultural, and historic resources of the park requiring management are detailed below including a condition assessment rating for each. Condition assessments are selected from the following options based on what most describes the current condition of the resource:

1. **Excellent** – resource is in excellent condition; all potential threats to the integrity of the resource are currently managed and effectively mitigated.
2. **Good** – resource is generally in good condition and stable; threats to the integrity of the resource require regular management to mitigate.
3. **Fair** – resource is in stable condition but difficult to mitigate ongoing threats; additional management support is required.
4. **Poor** – resource is generally in poor condition with management support required to both improve existing conditions and address threats.
5. **Critical** – resource is highly threatened or deteriorated and requires immediate management prioritization.

Significant Park Resources	Quantity	Current Conditions	Notes
Hardwood Forest	1642 acres	Fair	Forest is healthy but presence of invasive species and erosion concerns do exist
Park lake	25 acres	Good	Lake is in good condition with minor erosion. Roadside of the lake is covered in rock to reduce erosion, but mature trees have given way along the banks.
Inner Fortifications	5	Good/Fair	Some erosion concerns due to mature trees uprooting as well as rainwater runoff.
Trail System	Approx. 15 miles	Fair	Erosion concerns throughout due to rainwater runoff on steep bluffs.
Outer Fortifications	Approx. 5 miles	Good/Fair	Some erosion due to mature trees uprooting as well as rainwater runoff.
Butterfly Garden	1	Good	No significant erosion concerns due to the area being flat.
Beaver Pond	1	Good	No significant erosion concerns due to the area being flat. Access points from Beaver Pond to lake are blocked due to beaver dams.

Management Strategies

The management strategies outlined below are directly correlated to the resources identified previously in the *Resource Inventory and Assessment* section immediately above. These are general and overall management recommendations for each resource from which priority actions will be determined. Each resource has both a “Public Use” management strategy (which could include limited or no public access, or managed access with infrastructure and regulation) and a “General Management” strategy.

The priority assignments reflect the highest resource management priorities of the park over the next 1-5 years (High Priority) and 6-10 years (Moderate Priority)

Resource	Management Recommendations	Priority
Hardwood Forest	<p>Public Use: Managed access with infrastructure and regulation – access limited to trails and back country campsites with usage policies and regulations.</p> <p>General Management: The upland hardwood forests are managed for improvement of overall forest health which include ongoing invasive species management, erosion mitigation in areas of steep topography.</p>	High

Park Lake	<p>Public Use: Managed access with infrastructure and regulation – access limited to shoreline and watercraft.</p> <p>General Management: Managed for improvement of Park Lake shoreline and access points that is maintained and assessable for all users while ensuring the lake is entered only at designated areas.</p>	High
Inner Fortifications	<p>Public Use: Managed access with infrastructure and regulation – access limited to trails and roadway</p> <p>General Management: Managed for improvement to reduce visitor impact and protect the overall historical significance through erosion control, signage, and visitor education.</p>	High
Trail System	<p>Public Use: Managed access with infrastructure and regulation – access limited to trails and back country campsites with usage policies and regulations.</p> <p>General Management: Managed for improvement to reduce visitor impact and protect the overall historical significance through erosion control, signage, and visitor education. Provide treated 4x4 steps throughout trail system on steep bluffs where erosion concerns exist. Provide water breaks on trail systems to reduce rainwater runoff. Provide sediment basins in areas to not only reduce erosion but to build up from part erosion and to help with accessibility. Stabilization of roadways and trails with riprap/gabion stone to reduce cave off and erosion concerns along visitor access points and historical features.</p>	High
Outer Fortification	<p>Public Use: Managed access with infrastructure and regulation – access limited to trails and roadways.</p> <p>General Management: Managed for improvement to reduce visitor impact and protect the overall historical significance through erosion control, signage, and visitor education.</p>	High
Butterfly Garden	<p>Public Use: Managed access with infrastructure and regulation – access limited to walking path.</p> <p>General Management: Managed to preserve native species while educating the public and providing a recreational area.</p>	High
Beaver Pond	<p>Public Use: Managed access with infrastructure and regulation – access limited to viewing from roadway and trail system.</p> <p>General Management: Managed for waterfowl viewing and habitat while contributing to the overall stability of the Park lake.</p>	High

Land Management Strategies

In some cases, strategic land acquisitions or divestitures are necessary to meet the overall resource management goals and objectives of the park. This can include opportunities to address buffers, watersheds, viewsheds, inholdings, and adjacent properties. The table below details **general strategies** for land management. Timelines refer to Short Term (1-3 years), Mid Term (4-6 years), and Long Term (7-10 years).

Land Management Strategy	Timeline
Acquire small acreage to capture outer earthwork wall	Long Term

Supplemental Information

Fort Pillow is made up of highly erodible soils which require constant erosion control practices like the ones mentioned above.

Interpretive Programming and Education Plan

The Interpretation, Programming, and Education planning is currently going through a planning process to further build out the process. This section only represents the very basic framework. As TSP moves forward with the future of Interpretive programming and education this section will likely be changed to accommodate those modifications.

Attached to this plan are the Interpretive Program Templates in fillable PDF forms.

Fort Pillow State Historic Park was primarily designed to protect and preserve the Historic remains of the 1861 breastworks, battlefields, and the reconstructive fortification which represents the Civil War history of the park. While providing education of the impact of the April 12, 1864 Battle of Fort Pillow, construction of 5 inner fortifications, construction approximately 5 miles of outer earthworks, and the natural aspects that make up Fort Pillow State Historic Park.

Fort Pillow will educate the public on the Union Colored Regiment that occupied the Fort from 1862 through 1864 and how the Battle of April 12, 1864 became known as the Fort Pillow Massacre.

Interpretation, Programming and Education Goals

Goal: Tennessee State Parks will be the most accessible, welcoming, and inviting system of parks that enriches Tennesseans and visitors through excellent interpretation, education, and resource-based recreation.

Objective: *accessible, welcoming, and inviting to all:* create quality and varied programs of interpretation, recreation, and outreach so that all audiences feel welcome and invited.

Objective: *high quality programming:* develop and support mission-based and resource-relevant programs to engage visitors, empower staff, and develop community wellbeing.

Objective: *resource-based outdoor recreation:* provide resource-based outdoor recreation opportunities that ensure representation of Tennessee's natural, scenic, and cultural resources.

Park Interpretation and Programs should be developed with the following desired outcomes:

- Building stewards
- Ensuring Equity
- Providing the Highest Value
- Developing Resource Based Programming
- Supporting Staff

Strategic Programs and Services

The strategies detailed below with corresponding action plans are aligned with the Comprehensive Strategic Plan of Tennessee State Parks.

Strategy – Telling Full Stories: to identify and replicate best practices while establishing new methods for representing diverse, equitable, inclusive, and just dialogues.

- Action Plan: Provide historical and natural education to all audiences through Park tours, Museum tours, guided hikes, offsite programming, wreath ceremonies, presentations,

social media, state park website, and various other ways while telling full stories and educating the public on the battle of Fort Pillow that occurred April 12th, 1864.

- Action Plan: establish protocols for managing the sacred and solemn sites, considering the traditional resource-based recreation portions of the parks.

Strategy – Interpretative Media: Connecting people to the resources of Tennessee State Parks with technology in ways that complement and expand interpretation within and beyond the park, giving everyone access to becoming a park steward.

- Action Plan: Through Tennessee State Parks web page, social media, documentaries, podcasts, and other various means visitors will learn the full story with regards to the Battle of Fort Pillow, natural aspects, as well as current and future events.

Strategy – Develop and maintain a portfolio of programs across multiple types of experiences:

- A. Interpretation of natural, historic, and cultural resources
 - B. 3-5 unique experiences for all audiences
 - C. Varying intensity from self-guided to immersive experiences
 - D. Partnership opportunities for program delivery
 - E. Varying costs to the user from “free to fee” based on the benefit to the participant, value to the park, and impact to the resource.
- Action Plan: Fort Pillow will continue to offer a variety of programs from signature hikes, school group programming, partnership programming, Civil War education programs, guided hikes, watercraft tours, non-guided educational experiences through a well planned and executed program schedule. The price ranging from free to fee based according to the type of program being offered.

Strategy – Develop and maintain diverse and varied resourced-based outdoor recreation opportunities across multiple types of experiences:

- A. Managing recreational use with the stewardship needs of the resource
 - B. Varying intensity from self-guided to guided experiences
 - C. Partnership opportunities for program delivery
 - D. Varying costs to the user from “free to fee” based on the benefit to the participant, value to the park, and impact to the resource.
- Action Plan: Fort Pillow will continue to provide a wide range of resourced /based outdoor recreation opportunities from guided hikes, self-guided hikes, camping, watercraft tours and rentals, birding, and other outdoor related activities. Fort Pillow will continue to partner with outside agencies to not only offer a wider range of activities but to offer a more professional and equipped outdoor experience.

HELPFUL DEFINITIONS:

- Nonpersonal Interpretation: Interpretive media that do not require a person to deliver a message (i.e. exhibits, waysides, brochures, signs, magazines, books, etc.).
- Personal Interpretation: One person or persons providing interpretation to another person or persons.
- Interpretive Program: Activities, presentations, publications, audio-visual media, signs, and exhibits that convey key heritage resource messages to audiences. (Adapted from US Fish & Wildlife Service)
- Interpretation: a purposeful approach to communication that facilitates meaningful, relevant, and inclusive experiences that deepen understanding, broaden perspectives, and inspire engagement with the world around us.

Financial Performance Goals

Financial performance goals are a critical performance management tool of the Tennessee State Park System. While the financial performance of parks are managed more intently at the system level, individual parks are expected to recover a portion of their operating costs through the generation of earned revenues where appropriate and to contribute to the system goals. The majority of earned revenues at state parks are generated through facility usage (campsites, cabins, lodge rooms, rentable pavilions, etc.), the delivery of fee-based programs and services, equipment rental and usage, and retail sales. Other forms of revenue generation come from golf courses and restaurants where those amenities are present. That said, not all parks have the same ability to generate earned revenues because the availability of facilities or programs vary widely from one park to the next. The “recovery” of operational costs by earned revenues is referred to as “cost recovery”. Operating costs beyond those supported by earned revenues represents the extent to which state funding support operations at each park.

The table below represents the overall park cost recovery for this specific park for the most recent fiscal year and forecast estimates for the upcoming five years. These estimates are based on projection estimates for known and foreseeable costs and recovery figures.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE GOALS						
	Current Cost Recovery (2022)	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2023	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2024	Target Cost Recovery: FY: 2025	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2026	Target Cost Recovery: FY 2027
Park Overall	17%	14.99%	13.91%	13.97%	14.03%	14.08%

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